United Nations S/2002/562

Security Council

Distr.: General
21 May 2002

Original: English

Letter dated 21 May 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I refer to the letter dated 16 May 2002 addressed to you by Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim, "Minister for Foreign Affairs" of the "Transitional National Government" of Somalia (S/2002/550).

Let me say from the outset that Ethiopia vehemently rejects the fabrications and the lies of an Ethiopian "invasion" of some parts of south-western Somalia. The irresponsible allegations are only a continuation of the usual diatribe of a small group who are not even in control of most of their country's capital, but who have made a habit of using Ethiopia as a scapegoat whenever they become desperate. Ethiopia will not grace their accusations with a reply to each of their lies. Suffice it to say that what happened in the Gedo region was a fight between a group heavily armed by the "TNG" and local supporters of the Somali Reconstruction and Restoration Council. There was no Ethiopian involvement whatsoever.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that Ethiopia has no problems with the vast majority of the people of Somalia. Ethiopia has been the only country which has consistently allowed Somali nationals to enter its territory unhindered. Hundreds of thousands still live in Ethiopia. We wish them well, as we have done for over the last 11 years. We want them to have a peaceful and stable country. This is in our interests and also of those of the Horn of Africa. The small group around the "TNG" want the old enmity between Ethiopia and Somalia to be resurrected. Their leaders were only last month berating Ethiopia as an "infidel" country against whom a "jihad" should be waged. In addition, months before this latest outburst, various elements of the "TNG" were busy trying to subvert the stable areas of Somalia. In addition, they have been busy amassing arms received by air and sea from certain known countries. The intention was to seize by force all the areas which hitherto have eluded their control. Notwithstanding this, north-west Somalia or Somaliland remains peaceful and stable. Puntland remains calm as well. Other parts of Somalia, except where the hands of the "TNG" are found, are also relatively tranquil. *All these areas, which constitute more than 98 per cent of Somalia, have no problems with Ethiopia, and vice versa.*

The difficulties of the "TNG" with Ethiopia arises for two main reasons. *Firstly*, we have been consistently insisting that the Somali national reconciliation process has to continue with a view to forming a broad-based and all-inclusive government. This was also the position adopted by the Intergovernmental Authority

02-39340 (E) 210502

on Development at its meeting on 14 February 2002 in Nairobi. This means that those who did not take part in the Arta (Djibouti) Conference have to be on board. This has obviously become difficult for the "TNG" to accept. Thus, the attempt at blackmailing Ethiopia. It is in this light that the latest accusation in the United Nations by the "TNG" against Ethiopia should be viewed. Ethiopia simply cannot flatter the "TNG" by proclaiming that a legitimate and an all-inclusive government has already been established in Somalia. Ethiopia cannot be shamed into doing this through blackmail. *Secondly*, we have been pointing to elements allied to and within the "TNG" who are members of extremist groups whose influence and presence do not bode well for regional stability or the fight against terrorism.

In conclusion, the outburst by the "Foreign Minister" of the "TNG" is a desperate manifestation using the fiction of an Ethiopian "invasion" as scapegoat to announce its unwillingness to face the realities of the impending Somalia peace process in Nairobi, Kenya. Ethiopia will not be deterred by the unwise mutterings of the "TNG" and continues to positively support the Intergovernmental Authority on Development initiative under the leadership of Kenya. It is Ethiopia's hope that the "TNG" and those who support them abandon their illusion that peace in Somalia will be achieved outside the framework of a negotiated settlement in which all parties to the conflict take part. I would be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dr. Abdulmejid **Hussein**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative